

# **Ipswich Old Cemetery, Suffolk, War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

## **World War 1**



**C. J. BLACKLEY**

**AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER**

**6TH NOVEMBER, 1918**

## Charles John BLACKLEY

Charles John Blackley was born on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1884 in Bundaberg, Queensland to parents John & Elizabeth Blackley (nee Andrew).

The Australian Electoral Roll for 1906 & 1908 for the division of Wide Bay, subdivision of Maryborough listed Charles John Blackley, Pattern Maker, John Street. Also listed were Elizabeth Blackley, Home Duties, John St., Jeannie Blackley, Clerk, John St., & John Blackley Manufacturer, John St.

Charles John Blackley married Susanah May Leftwich on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1912.

Marriage Notice in *The Brisbane Courier*, Queensland – 2 November, 1912:

*BLACKLEY – LEFTWICH – On October 29, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Creek-street, Charles John Blackley, eldest son of Mr and Mrs John Blackley, Maryborough, to Susanah May, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs F. H. Leftwich, Kangaroo Point.*

The Australian Electoral Roll for 1913 for the division of Oxley, subdivision of Kangaroo Point, recorded Charles John Blackley, Patternmaker of 12 Quinton Street & May Blackley, Home Duties, of 12 Quinton Street

A birth was registered in 1913 for Charles Frederick John Blackley to parents Charles John & Susanah May Blackley (nee Leftwich).

A birth was registered in 1914 for Bessie Adell Blackley to parents Charles John & Susanah May Blackley (nee Leftwich).

The Australian Electoral Roll for 1916 & 1917 for the division of Wide Bay, subdivision of Maryborough listed Charles John Blackley, Cordial Manufacturer, Walker St & May Blackley, Home Duties, Walker St.

Charles John Blackley joined the Munition Workers Scheme. He was working in Britain from early 1917.

Munitions Worker Charles John Blackley died on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1918 in the district of Ipswich, Suffolk from double pneumonia (according to newspaper reports).

A death for Charles J. Blackley, aged 36, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Ipswich, Suffolk, England.

Munitions Worker Charles John Blackley was buried in Ipswich Old Cemetery, Suffolk, England – Plot number LL. I. 45.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker C. J. Blackley, Australian Munition Worker. No family details are listed.

### Australian Munitions Workers

Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance for the duration of service, and eventual repatriation to Australia. Married men also received a separation allowance, but were required to allot a portion of all their earnings to dependants. The men were expected to work in whatever industries they were directed to by the British Board of Trade, and under the prevailing conditions and wages for the duration of hostilities.

Government newspaper adverts appeared in August, 1916, and the first party of 76 workers departed Australia in September. Groups continued to be recruited and sent at intervals, with the eventual number of workers under the scheme totalling just over 5,000. Almost 1,000 of these had already been working in Britain under private

agreements with large firms such as Vickers, and were brought under the conditions of the scheme. An additional 200 former AIF soldiers were also recruited in Britain. Initially only skilled workers were sought, however at the request of the British Government later groups included large numbers of navvies for general labouring.

These men were not members of the Australian Imperial Forces and did not serve in combat units, but were recruited to meet the shortfall in skilled labour that threatened many of Britain's key wartime industries including munitions.

*(Source: Australian War Memorial)*



Australian Munitions Worker Charles John Blackley, Service number 1945, is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.



**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** *(Capital Photographer)*

*\*\* Note – The Service Record file for Charles John Blackley, Australian Mmunition Worker No. 1945, had not been purchased at the time of researching from National Archives, Australia. Once the file is purchased it is then open for all to view on-line.*



## **Newspaper Notices**

*The newspapers at the time were encouraged not to report munition explosions or deaths through TNT poisoning as it would affect the morale of the civilian population and so reports in newspapers are virtually non-existent. When the war ended the Australians returned home and life moved on.*

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## **MUNITION WORKERS**

### **AUSTRALIANS IN GREAT BRITAIN**

Melbourne, Thursday.

The Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) announces that during the period from the inception of the schemes for the despatch of munition workers and navvies to Great Britain up to June 30 last, 2662 munition workers had been disembarked in England for employment on munition and war work. There had also been enrolled under the munition workers' scheme 124 men who had been discharged from the A.I.F. in England for that purpose, and two discharged A.I.F. men had enrolled under the navvies' agreement, making the total number of men engaged in work in Great Britain under both these schemes 4,998. Of this number 384 men had returned to Australia – the majority on account of ill-health. There had been 23 deaths. The agreement of 38 men had been cancelled for disciplinary and other reasons. Six of the men had enlisted in the A.I.F., in England, five men had enlisted in the Royal Navy, and nine men had enlisted in the British Army, leaving the total number of men still in England under the Commonwealth agreement as 4,533. In addition these men were registered on the index held in Australia House 674 Australian munition workers who proceeded to Great Britain under private contract prior to the inauguration of the Commonwealth scheme. Of the men still in England on June 30, 1918, 87 were waiting return up to that date, 152 men had proceeded to France to engage in special work, and 107 of them had returned again to England. Australian munition workers were employed at 409 different firms or centres, and navvies at 192, and the value of the output produced by the labour of these men was estimated at £6,000,000.

Provision for the payment of munition workers and navvies who proceeded to Great Britain on war work under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government is made in an amendment to the war financial regulations issued today. Munition workers and navvies are to be provided with a free passage from Australia to Great Britain and back. In the case of munition workers a dependants' allowance of 25s a week, with allowances for children, will be made for the first eight weeks after embarkation. Subsequently the allowance will be 20s. Separation allowances equal to that paid in the case of a private in the A.I.F. will be paid to dependants.

*(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 30 August, 1918)*

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## **DEATH OF MR CHARLES BLACKLEY**

In the midst of the peace rejoicings on Saturday night, the grim shadow of family bereavement descended upon the home of Alderman J. Blackley, when that gentleman was informed by the Rev. M. Kirkpatrick that his son, Mr Charles John Blackley, aged 34 years, and who has been absent in Britain as a munition worker for a year and seven months, had died on November 6 from double pneumonia. Only in the afternoon Alderman Blackley had been advised officially that another son, Corporal Andrew Blackley, of the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, who has been on service for three years, two of which have been spent in the firing line in France, had been wounded and admitted to hospital. Alderman Blackley, Mrs Blackley and Miss Annie Blackley were engaged in assisting at the Fallen Soldiers' Memorial fund fete, held in the gardens, when the news was conveyed to them. Mr Robert Blackley, the other remaining son, was dispatched to Brisbane by the mail train in order to acquaint the wife of the deceased gentleman, who had two children, around 6 and 4 years of age respectively, and Miss Jennie Blackley, at present in Brisbane.

The late Mr Charles Blackley was an iron pattern maker by trade, having served his time at Messrs Walkers Ltd., while he had subsequent experience in Brisbane for 6 years, being foreman pattern maker of the establishments of Messrs. Sergeant and Co. and E. D. J. Dowry, after which he returned to Maryborough and was for three years engaged in his father's business. During his residence in this city, he was extremely popular, being extensively connected with practically all the sporting organisations and was the Maryborough representative on the Brisbane board in connection with football matters. He was of robust stature, and knew little illness. Although no official information has been received, it is believed that the cause of death was consequent on the effects of Spanish influenza, the dread disease which is raging in all parts of the world.

*(Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser, Queensland – 18 November, 1918)*

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## **DEATHS**

BLACKLEY – On 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1918, at Ipswich, England, of double pneumonia, Charles John Blackley (Australian munition worker), our dearly beloved husband and father.

Inserted by May, Freddie and Bessie.

*(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 19 November, 1918)*

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## **LOYAL PERSEVERANCE LODGE**

There was a very large attendance of members of the Loyal Perseverance Lodge at their regular meeting on Monday last, mainly to tender their respects to the Grand Secretary of the Order, Bro. Chas. E. Birbeck, who is paying an official visit to the various lodges in this district. Owing to the recent sale of the Oddfellows' Hall, the officers of the lodge had been empowered to arrange for accommodation elsewhere and this meeting was the first held in the new rooms in Helsham's Buildings which the officers have selected as the future meeting hall for the coming year.

..... It was reported that the secretary had sent a letter of condolence to Mrs Charles Blackley on the death of her husband in England, he being an old member of the lodge.

*(Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser, Queensland – 7 December, 1918)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

BLACKLEY – In loving memory of Charles John Blackley (Australian munition worker), who died at Ipswich, England, on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

Inserted by his loving wife and children.

BLACKLEY – In loving memory of Charlie (munition worker), who died at Ipswich, England, 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Inserted by his loving sister Jeannie.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 6 November, 1919)*

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## ROLL OF HONOUR

BLACKLEY – In loving memory of Charles John Blackley, Australian Munition Worker, who died at Ipswich, England, on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1918.

Inserted by his loving wife and children.

(*The Week*, Brisbane, Queensland – 14 November, 1919)

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## IN MEMORIAM

BLACKLEY – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Charles John Blackley, who died in England, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1918, while engaged in munition work.

(Inserted by his loving parents, brothers and sisters).

(*Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Queensland – 6 November, 1920)

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## Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) honours the 1,700,000 men and women of the forces of the Commonwealth who died in the two world wars and ensures that their memory is never forgotten. The applicable periods of consideration are 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 for the First World War and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947 for the Second World War.

The Commission's principles:

- Each of the dead should be commemorated by name on the headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed

During both WW1 (& WW2) a number of Commonwealth civilian organisations were accepted by the military as qualifying for war grave status.

Members of the Recognised Civilian Organisations had to meet two additional criteria not required by military casualties.

1. Their death had to be caused by war actions or the increased threat caused by war and
2. They had to be on duty at the time of their death - being posted overseas counted as 'being on duty'.

The Australian government deemed that their War and Munitions Workers (men and women) qualified for war grave treatment as they were recruited as a body and were posted overseas for the war effort. Some of their CWGC entries show a 'service number' indicating that they were an organised body. All but one of these casualties are buried in the UK - the other being in France.

Australian Munition Worker C. J. Blackley's Commonwealth War Graves Headstone in Ipswich Old Cemetery, Suffolk, England.



*(Photo by Nettlyne)*

## **Ipswich Old Cemetery, Suffolk**

Ipswich Old Cemetery, Suffolk contains around 366 Casualties from both World Wars. Around 265 War Graves are from World War 1. There are 4 Australian War Graves from World War 1 & 1 from World War 2.



**Ipswich Old Cemetery, Suffolk** *(Photo from CWGC)*